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**Comisiynydd y Cynulliad
Assembly Commissioner**

Jocelyn Davies AM
Chair of the Finance Committee
National Assembly of Wales
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9 October 2013

Dear Jocelyn

I would like to thank you and the members of the Finance Committee for your time last week in scrutinising the Commission's Draft 2014-15 Budget and the constructive observations made.

If you recall I agreed to provide some additional information on ICT costs, our Graduate Scheme and school education visits.

I have provided the information requested in the attached documents. You will also wish to note that we have received the Government's formal confirmation that we can restrict the indicative funding for future year to 2015-16.

If you need any further information, or have any questions, please do not hesitate to ask.

Yours sincerely

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Ysgrifenyddiaeth Comisiwn y Cynulliad/Assembly Commission Secretariat

ICT Costs – Details for Finance Committee

ICT Costs			
Description		Actuals 2012-13	Projected 2015-16
Commission Staff Costs		563,796	1,441,200
Staff travel & subsistence		4,579	12,000
ICT Contracted-Out Services	*	2,576,434	1,200,000
Licence and maintenance costs	*	387,763	450,000
Additional Licence and maintenance costs			150,000
Broadcasting services		474,704	460,000
Website services		121,599	130,000
ICT revenue and consumable purchases		89,820	130,050
IT Development Projects		211,522	-
ICT Costs (Actual per Audited Accounts)		3,861,842	2,520,050
Savings re-invested			460,000
Total ICT Costs		4,430,217	4,433,250
* ICT contracted out service costs total £3.0m in 2012-13 and are expected to reduce by 44% to £1.6m in 2015-16			

The above table shows the cost of providing ICT services in the year before the transition project started and the projected costs for the year after transition has completed.

The decision to bring ICT services in house is expected to deliver a 10% reduction in the overall costs when comparing on a like for like basis. This amount will be reinvested to further improve services. On a Value for Money basis, we will be delivering more with the same funding.

By the end of 2015-16 the nature of the costs will have changed with increasing staff costs being more than offset by reductions in fixed and variable costs.

In particular, there will be a 44% reduction in fixed contracted out services costs when comparing 2012-13 expenditure with the indicative budget for 2015-16. This change is offset by increases in variable and staff costs specifically with a £0.8m Investment in staff required to provide the ICT services in house.

Graduate Scheme

The Commission's 2012-13 budget document introduced the creation of apprenticeship and graduate placement schemes, improving opportunities at all levels for those who want to work at the Assembly. We have trialled placements for both over the last 18 months.

The Apprenticeship scheme has proved very successful and we will be increasing the number of placements to six next year; we will be advertising shortly for the second tranche. The first tranche of apprentices were paid £12,000 per annum, though this is currently under review as we have been asked to consider increasing the salary to the national Living Wage.

By 2015-16 we are aiming to introduce a Graduates' Development Programme rather than one-off, fixed term placements. Our trial to date has included two graduate positions: we filled one in the ICT team following advert through Welsh Universities and on our website. For the other, in the Assembly Business Directorate, we worked in partnership with the Wales Governance Centre and the St David's Group, advertising the role to students on their Masters in Wales Politics and Governance as part of a pilot. Unfortunately we did not attract a suitable field so have not pursued the trial further.

The graduate role is remunerated at entry level (Team Support) which has a salary of £17,410. In terms of how the salary interacts with student loan repayments, once earnings exceed the threshold of £16,365 a graduate starts repaying their student loan at a rate of 9% per annum. A graduate on the entry level salary would therefore be paying £94.05 per year or £7.82 per month.

The Assembly's Education Service

The Assembly's Education Service meets a range of schools, colleges and youth groups from all parts of Wales, either in Siambr Hywel and the Senedd or out in the regions. The groups include Primary Schools, Secondary Schools, Further Education Colleges 16+, PGCE teacher training students from Universities, Primary school Councils, Secondary School Councils, Local Authority Youth Parliaments, Pupil Referral Units, NEET groups, Special Schools, Travellers Youth Groups.

Monitoring

Every academic year we keep records of where the groups are from i.e. constituency. For a snap shot of the geographical spread of all groups, please refer to Annex 1.

Since May we have been keeping KPI records of all 'new' schools that have visited and have been visited. We have defined 'new' schools as those schools and colleges who have not visited in the last 3 years.

New Booking system

In the past the Education Bookings Calendar opened on the first Monday after Spring half term for the whole of the forthcoming academic year. This operated on a first come first served basis.

This year the Education Bookings Calendar opened on 03 June for the Autumn term – the months of September to December 2013 only. For bookings for the Spring and Summer terms bookings will open after half term on Monday 04 November. It is still a first come first served service.

Schools are not turned away since we can offer other dates and if those are not suitable we can offer a Senedd only visit or an outreach presentation.

Statistics 2012-13

During the academic year 2012-13 the education service delivered presentations and workshops to a total of 557 groups (616 in 2011-12), 415 schools and colleges reaching an audience of 16,158 pupils (17,698 in 2011-12). This figure also includes youth groups outside formal education.

A total number of 49 groups visited from North Wales. This amounts to 18% of all visits to Siambr Hywel. The table below shows the breakdown via constituency of schools who received educational visits at the Assembly.

Table 1

Constituency	Number of Visits
Anglesey	7
Arfon	10
Aberconwy	3
Clwyd West	4
Vale of Clwyd	1
Clwyd South	9
Delyn	3
Dwyfor Meirionydd*	5
Alyn and Deeside	1
Wrexham	6

*Dwyfor Meirionydd constituency is outside the North Wales region but is included in the work of the North Wales education officer.

During the academic year 2012-13 we delivered presentations to 125 groups in the North Wales area (3,000+ pupils) and in Mid Wales 108 groups (2,415 pupils). The table below shows the breakdown via constituency of schools who received educational presentations at their school or college across the North Wales region.

Table 2

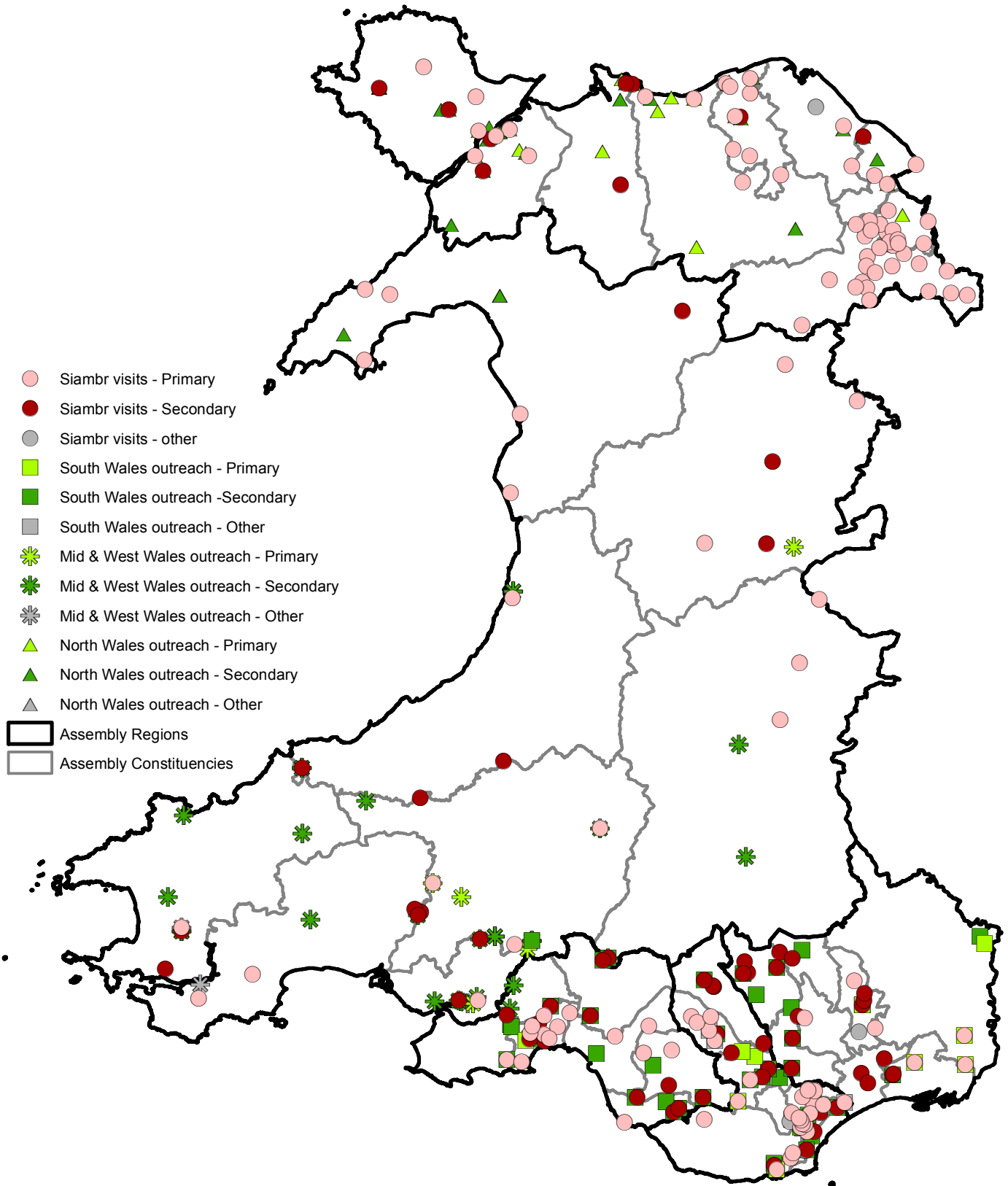
Constituency	Number of Visits
Anglesey	33
Arfon	20
Aberconwy	14
Clwyd West	22
Vale of Clwyd	2
Clwyd South	5
Delyn	4
Dwyfor Meirionydd*	4
Alyn and Deeside	9
Wrexham	12

*Dwyfor Meirionydd constituency is outside the North Wales region but is included in the work of the North Wales education officer.

All Siambr Hywel and outreach visits – September 2011 to July 2012

Total visits = 616

Due to the scale of the map one symbol may represent more than one visit.



Research Service

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